



MEETING ABSTRACT

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# Epidemiology of smoking among the employees of a medical university and strategies to decrease prevalence

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From 11th Annual Conference of the International Society for the Prevention of Tobacco Induced Diseases (ISPTID)

Athens, Greece. 9-11 December 2013

## Background

The purpose of the study is to assess the prevalence of smoking among the employees of a medical university, to provide descriptive statistics of the actual situation, and to suggest university targeted policy changes in reducing smoking for the ultimate goal of a smoke-free campus.

## Materials and methods

A review of the medical files of all employees of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Targu Mures, Romania (UMF-TGM), was performed in the Occupational Health and Safety Office in July 2013. For each employee, the person's age, gender, occupation, and smoking history (pack-years, reasons to start, reasons to quit) were recorded. Epidemiological data analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel and the data was organized in sub-groups based on age, gender and occupation. The significance levels were assessed. The study was performed in concordance with university research policy.

## Results

UMF-TGM has 677 total employees, of which 6 had no information available. Of the 671 employees with information, the age range was 26-65 years with a median of 44 years. There were 218 smokers (32.0%, 1-to-56 pack-year range) and 453 non-smokers (68.0%), of which 406 never smoked and 47 were former smokers. There were 390 women (113 smokers, 29.0%) and 281 men (105 smokers, 37.0%). There were 375 health professionals, of which 295 were physicians (72 smokers, 24.0%), 51 were dentists (16 smokers, 31.0%), and 29 pharmacologists

(6 smokers, 21.0%). The teaching faculty had 413 members (health professionals and non-health professionals), of which 108 were smokers (26.0%). The non-teaching university employees (technicians, administrative assistants, maintenance personnel) included 258 persons, of which 110 (43.0%) were smokers. Reasons to start smoking included the presence of smokers in the social environment, curiosity/boredom, and coolness. Reasons to quit smoking included health, money and social environment.

## Conclusions

Despite of major public health efforts, smoking remains one of the most important causes of morbidity and mortality. The prevalence rate of smoking at UMF-TGM is 32.0%, which was significantly higher in men and non-teaching employees than in women and teaching faculty. These rates are unacceptably high, given that a medical institution should set example of a smoke-free environment and healthy lifestyle. Current university smoking policy conforms to the national smoking policies; however, there are no targeted programs in place to reduce smoking. Therefore, initiatives will be presented to the university to increase awareness and assist current smokers in quitting.

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Published: 6 June 2014

doi:10.1186/1617-9625-12-S1-A3

**Cite this article as:** Viragh and Viragh: Epidemiology of smoking among the employees of a medical university and strategies to decrease prevalence. *Tobacco Induced Diseases* 2014 **12**(Suppl 1):A3.

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